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RE: Duke Energy Central Corridor Pipeline Extension Project, OSPB 16-0253-GA -BTX

On July 27, 2016 I attended a Duke Energy Central Pipeline forum at Sharonville Convention Center, Cincinnati, OH. The forum was arranged by Hamilton County Commissioners to allow local city officials to ask questions to Duke Energy President Jim Henning, Director John Hill, and General Manager Gary Hebbeler.

I left the meeting disturbed at Duke Energy's continued push for this pipeline. It is clear that Duke Energy has not taken seriously the concerns of the citizens and government officials of the many impacted towns. Duke Energy has been asked by all the towns to find a solution that does not place a pipeline in heavily populated areas, destroy greenspaces, and disrupt or negatively alter vibrant communities. While Duke previously gave the impression they were indeed taking a step back, it is evident by the many letters they have recently sent and the dialog in this meeting that at most they have made very minor changes to their plans.

Duke discussed why "we" need this pipeline, why it is located where they propose, and whether it is safe. My concerns and objections are many.

**Why it's needed:** Duke's rationale for this pipeline is highly suspect because the need and their proposal just don't add up, plus they haven't been consistent or upfront with their reasoning. They now say they are balancing the supply from the south, they are replacing old pipes, and they are retiring propane peaking plants.

- My understanding is that the majority of old smaller pipelines have already been replaced, so which pipelines are they replacing? They did not identify any larger pipeline that is being replaced.
- Are they really balancing supply from the south or is their ultimate goal to transmit large volumes of gas to the southern states?
- It seems there should be other solutions to replacing the propane peaking plants (which provides only 10% in peak times). This pipeline far exceeds what is needed to replace these plants.
- They say more businesses are converting to natural gas, but at the same time residential need is declining so where is this future high volume need?

I'd like to believe that Duke Energy has smart people working in their company, or at least can access consultants that can provide better, safe, cost-effective solutions than a dangerous, high volume and pressure pipeline, assuming this need really exists.

**Location:** Duke Energy continues to evade giving specific reasons for the routes they have currently proposed and have failed to provide significant alternatives. The route goes through over 13 communities, and next to over fifty schools and daycare centers. When directly asked about the routes

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they skirted the issue with standard answers like we try to find solutions with the least impact. This does not seem to be case because there are areas in Hamilton County that do not have nearly as high population density, the number of schools, places of worship or businesses. Additionally there are areas that would not incur the magnitude of daily disruption to traffic, residents, and businesses. Duke says they are listening to the complaints and making modifications, but these modifications appear to be minor. The overwhelming sentiment of the communities is NO large pipeline in highly populated areas. Duke needs to start over, not just tweak what they have.

**Safety and Environment:** Duke wants to assure citizens that this pipeline can be installed and maintained safely. They said they will monitor and follow safety regulations. Yet, just last year Duke pleaded guilty to nine criminal counts of environmental negligence and will pay \$102 million in penalties and be on probation for the next five years. According to testimony in court, Duke's own engineers cautioned the company about the integrity of storm pipes under the Dan River coal site as far back as 1979 and as recently as a few years ago and the company refused to investigate. "They should have been monitoring better," said DOJ attorney John Cruden. "They should have been fixing what they saw. They should have been listening to their employees. And if they had done that this spill would not have occurred." When asked about Duke's poor record in the recent July 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, President Jim Henning implied we ignore all the recent poor records and just look at one recent example that he felt was a good job. A rational person would not ignore all the data. What happens to this pipeline in 2 years, 5 years, 10 years when no one is closely monitoring Duke.

Duke also avoids acknowledging that accidents on pipelines happen regularly and the majority of problem are found by 3<sup>rd</sup> parties, not through regular monitoring. Per the Wall Street Journal, from 1994 through 2013 the U.S. had 855 serious incidents with gas lines, causing 319 fatalities and 1,254 injuries, with over half a billion dollars in damages. These numbers would be dramatically higher if not for the fact that most of these pipelines are not in highly populated areas. Explosions in the past few years (Salem, PA; Melvindale, MI; Sissonville, WV; Fresno, CA; San Bruno CA; Barnett Reservoir, MS) and gas leaks (Porter Ranch, CA) further underscore the dangers of this pipeline. These explosions are from new pipes, old pipes, during construction, after construction, 3<sup>rd</sup> party digging, etc. There is not a single cause to these accidents, but Duke CAN reduce future catastrophic events by finding alternative solutions to the pipeline or placing the pipeline in a rural, less-populated area.

I, like all my neighbors, have spent their life working hard to invest in living in a safe community with mature trees and wildlife. I have worked to build equity in my home so I can retire without being a burden to the government and my family. Duke's proposal will ruin tree-lined streets and greenspaces, displace wildlife, and devalue homes and neighborhoods. Duke seems to think giving a fair price to remove our trees will set these issues right. Unfortunately it won't. Duke's proposal destroys the selling points for many of the neighborhoods involved with no meaningful benefit to these neighborhoods. Duke's own Gary Hebbeler admitted that whether it is a 24" or 30" pipeline, the construction is highly destructive to the area.

**Ask yourself...** would you want this pipeline in your backyard, where you worship and shop, where you gather with friends and family? Would you want it next to the school your child attends? Would you want your home, neighborhood, and city landscaping destroyed? Would you want your property value to drop? Would you be willing to face the inability to sell your home because it has become a less desirable place to live due to loss of natural beauty, higher insurance costs, inability for buyers to get

mortgages, and safety concerns? I don't think anyone can honestly answer yes to any of these questions.

So please do what is right. Do not allow this pipeline. Duke needs to do a better job to prove there really is a need and to find an alternative plan. What other solutions could be viable that isn't a large pipeline? Even if they are not ideal for Duke they may provide a more reasonable approach for the community at large. Duke should not have the right to ruin our green spaces, place residents and employees at risk, and depreciate our property.

Sincerely,

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